DOCUMENT RESUME

CG 002 766

ED 023 111

Initiating Guidance Services in the Elementary School.
Louisiana State Dept. of Education, Baton Rouge.
Pub Date Jan 68
Note - 14p.
EDRS Price MF - $0.25 HC - $0.80
Descriptors - *Counselor Role, *Elementary School Guidance, Inservice Education, *Pilot Projects, *Program Development

The elementary guidance program aims at providing developmental, preventive, and remedial services, with the major emphasis on the developmental phase. The experiences in the pilot programs of elementary guidance in Louisiana have demonstrated that effective guidance services in the elementary school are contingent upon an understanding, willing, and ready staff. To bring about this readiness, an in-service training program has been found useful in determining what the elementary program is about, how it can help teachers perform their responsibilities more effectively, and how it can assist students in their development. One of the most effective in-service training programs has been found to be the child-study approach. This involves, primarily, a case study concerned with the gathering of significant data about the child. The roles of various staff members and the kinds of significant information need ed in child study are delineated. The elementary counselor serves as a catalyst to the entire faculty in fostering the physical, social, educational, and total pe sonality development of the child. (PS)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OF LOUISIANA

January, 1968

INITIATING GUIDANCE SERVICES IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by the

Guidance Section
Division of Vocational Education

Issued by

STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

William J. Dodd, Superintendent

ED023111

CG 002 766

INITIATING GUIDANCE SERVICES IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

One of the newest and most promising trends in education is the development of guidance services at the elementary level. The need for the specialized services of an elementary school counselor has become increasingly evident since World War II. The world in which today's child lives and the problems he faces are as different from those of yesteryear as the society in which he lives is different. This society of ours is a mobile one with 20 percent of our population moving each year. It is one where three out of every ten mothers work, where broken homes are common, where one out of every 12 Americans will be hospitalized at some time in their lives for mental illness, where a high school education is rapidly becoming the minimum requirement for entrance into the work force, and where every child must attend school until he is 16. It is estimated that each worker entering the work force today will have to be retrained four to five times in his lifetime because his skills have become obsolete, and that because of technological progress, most of the jobs in the year 2,000 are not even in existence today. It is small wonder then, that all children need whatever assistance they can get to help prepare them to cope with the complex world in which they must live and make a living.

The elementary guidance program aims at providing developmental, preventive and remedial services with the major emphasis on the developmental phase. Elementary children are still in the process of becoming -- physically, socially, educationally and as a total personality. It is to the wide individual differences in development that are present in all children that we must direct our efforts. In these formative years

the child must progress toward maturity in self acceptance, in understanding of self and in the recognition of his assets and limitations. There must be a developing of independence, of the ability to take on responsibility, to make choices and finally to be responsible for those choices.

In the academic area, we are concerned with the development of the child's ability to read, comprehend, write, speak and listen. Physically, he is expected to develop in coordination, strength and endurance.

The appearance of the elementary guidance counselor on the scene is a result of the findings in education that an additional helping person must be employed to assist teachers in the developmental tasks of all children. It has often been postulated that all teachers are guidance workers. This is true, for no person in the school has more contact with or influence over the child than the teacher. The intent in adding this new specialist to the faculty is not to take away the guidance responsibilities of the teacher, but to provide a trained person who will help make the teacher's guidance efforts more effective.

The tasks we set for the elementary level students are formidable ones. We expect him to accept, willingly, the change from being the center of attention in the home to being a cooperative member of a school group. As a member of his class, he is expected to successfully master language skills, develop an appreciation of his social heritage, cope with mathematics and the other academic disciplines considered important by our society. In addition, he must learn to get along with his peers as well as all the new adult figures in his school life. He must grow in self-acceptance, a prerequisite to acceptance of others, and, at the same time, he must develop a realistic concept of himself. This will

involve gaining an understanding of his aspirations, interests, and aptitudes as well as his weaknesses. He must become familiar with the world of work and his responsibilities in it and he must begin to see himself in relation to all these forces with which he interacts. The role of the school in teaching the academic disciplines has progressively expanded until, at present, almost all phases of the child's life are affected. The teacher has increasingly assumed these new duties with little or no assistance. It is into this gap that the elementary counselor must move.

Experience in the pilot programs of elementary guidance in this State has amply demonstrated that effective guidance services in the elementary school are contingent upon an understanding, willing and ready staff. To bring about this readiness, an in-service training program has been found useful in determining what the elementary program is about, how it can help teachers perform their responsibilities more effectively and how it can assist students in their development. One of the most effective in-service training programs has been found to be the child-study approach. This involves primarily a case study which is concerned with the gathering of significant data about the child, an interpretation of that data and the development of a course of action to assist the child. In some cases each member of the faculty may select a child to study for the entire year, while in other cases two or more members may study one child. In any event, the objective is to better understand the focus of the proposed guidance services through development of understanding of some of the techniques that will be used by the counselor.

In initiating this in-service project, leadership should come from the principal. A staff meeting should be held to discuss the possibility of developing an elementary guidance program. If it is presented with

enthusiasm, then one can logically expect a more enthusiastic response from the staff. Methods of launching child study as an in-service training program should then be discussed. If the principal or someone on the faculty feels qualified to discuss the gathering and use of data in the study, he should do so. If not, then outside consultants should be brought in to cover the various areas. Information to be included in this study of the child should contain the following:

School record: This would involve grades, standardized test scores, anecdotal records, autobiographies, subjects taken in school, co-curricular activities and record of interests.

Out-of-school record: In this category would fall part-time jobs, any juvenile offenses, church activities and clubs or organizations to which the child may belong.

Home visits: Visits to the home and conferences with the parents are potentially the most informative techniques in gaining a better understanding of the child.

Physical and emotional record: Results of examinations by school nurses, doctors and dentists, records of any emotional disturbance, serious illness and general physical condition. If the school has no health program, then the parents' help should be solicited in getting this information from the family doctor.

Socio-economic background: Does the child live with both parents, if not, with whom does he live? What are the ages of parents or guardians, nationality, religion, economic status, education, number of siblings and parental occupation.

Anecdotal record: The anecdotal record has been found to be an important means of studying and understanding children. This record is

simply a written report of an incident deemed to be significant in understanding the student's behavioral pattern. This report may be made by the teacher, principal, counselor or others. It should contain at least two parts: the incident and an interpretation of it. In some cases, action taken because of the incident might be shown. The episode reported may be either a positive or a negative one. The main thing to remember is that the incident reported is only one sampling of that person's behavior and it should be reported as objectively as possible. The number of such anecdotes needed in order to see some behavioral pattern will vary; however, when there is a recurrence of similar incidents they give a clue to understanding the individual. To increase the validity of this technique, anecdotes should be written over a period of time by several observers and should include incidents that are thought to reflect significant behavior.

An example of an anecdote is as follows: Incident - Susie was observed jumping rope with Pat and Mary. A few minutes later she was observed crying while the two other little girls were jumping rope nearby. She stated that Mary and Pat were telling secrets to each other about her and didn't want her to jump rope with them. Interpretation - Susie is unsure of herself with her peers. She is easily offended at real or imagined disapproval. She needs constant positive reinforcement until she can build a more adequate self concept. Action taken - Susie was praised for her coordination in jumping rope. Mary and Pat came over while the writer was talking with Susie and asked her if she wanted to play. Later the writer complimented them on their skill and how well they played together.

After the data are gathered they should be synthesized and presented to others on the staff for a "staffing" session. It might be advisable at first to bring in outside consultants to assist with interpreting the data and developing a means for using it to help the child or children involved.

A great deal of the information needed can be obtained from a personal data sheet filled in by the parents or by the child with parental assistance. In developing such a questionnaire, caution should be used to ask only for such replies as will be absolutely necessary and even then to assure the parents that the information so solicited will be kept in the strictest confidence. Most essential data needed will be names of parents, education, occupation, nationality, number of siblings, some measure of economic status such as low - $1,000-4,999; middle - $5,000-8,000; upper middle - $8,000-14,999; upper - $15,000-up.

Autobiography: The autobiography is included in the study of children because often the child reveals information vital in understanding and helping him.

Both structured and unstructured autobiographies are used, with each type having certain desirable features. The structured type often is so constructed that pertinent information related to educational and vocational guidance is received. The unstructured type often gives more insight into the emotional and social problems since the student is telling about himself rather than about things related to him.

If this device is used as part of the classroom work in English or other subjects, care should be taken not to put so much emphasis on grammar or form that significant information about the student is lost.

Testing: In testing, we use two main types of standardized tests

in addition to teacher-made tests. They are achievment and aptitude tests. The first is designed to indicate how much one has accomplished as a result of his past education. The latter attempts to measure the speed and ease with which he learns.

It must be emphasized that testing should be a very small facet of the overall guidance program. The usual intelligence and achievement tests do not measure certain attributes such as creativity. Great caution should, therefore, be used in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of children based on standardized tests. In the area of teacher-made tests, care should be exercised to give grades in respect to the individual's progress and not in relation to some other student's progress.

Some of the uses of standardized tests are as follows:

1. As a basis for determining the intellectual strengths and weaknesses of students.
2. As a diagnostic instrument to determine learning difficulties of students.
3. To determine validity of teacher-made tests.
4. To provide a pattern of the individual's growth over a period of years.
5. To aid in curriculum planning. (grouping, remedial work, acceleration)
6. For guidance purposes in promoting self-understanding and wise decision making.
7. To assist in the assessment of teaching methods and programs.

Since most tests today are machine scored and the results given in percentiles, stanines, GE or GP, or in the case of aptitude tests, IQ, an examination of these terms will be helpful. It will also be helpful

to understand what is meant by local and national norms.

Norms: This term is applied to the group to whom the test was given when it was prepared. The students taking the test are at the level for which the test was prepared.

National Norms: This represents the cross section or sample of all the students in the nation who took the test.

Local Norms: This represents those students taking the test locally, usually in the school in which the test was given.

Percentile: This represents the percentage of people in the sample on which the test was normed that scored at a certain point. A child scoring at the 60th percentile does better than 60 percent of the students on whom the test was normed. Usually both a national and local norm are shown.

Stanines: This is another way of presenting scores. Stanines range from 1 to 9. A student scoring in the first stanine would be in the bottom 10 percent of the group to which he was compared.

Grade Equivalent or Grade Placement: Scores on standardized tests may be presented in either of these terms. A GE or GP of 4.6 means that the student scored at the fourth grade sixth month.

IQ: This is a means of representing a person's mental age (intellectual development) in relation to his age in years. It is a ratio be tween the person's mental age as determined by testing and his age in years. $(IQ = \frac{MA}{CA} \times 100)$

Relating one set of test scores to another set has been found helpful in studying students. One device employed is the scattergram. In the following table, a comparison is shown between grades made by students on achievement and scholastic aptitude scores. In place of these scores,

we could have shown IQ scores on the vertical line and teacher grades on the top horizontal line or any other combination of measured attributes.

SCATTER DIAGRAM OF IQ SCORES AND PERCENTILES ON AN ACHIEVEMENT TEST

IQ SCORES	PERCENTILE SCORES									
	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99
110-119								1		
100-109						11				
90-99					111		1			
80-89	11	1		1						
70-79	1		11							
60-69										

It will be noted that there is a tendency for students making low scores on the IQ test to also make low scores on the achievement test and the students with high IQ's to make higher achievement test scores. In place of the marks in each cell, the name or symbol for each child can be entered.

After all available and useful information concerning the child has been collected, it is arranged in a logical sequence. The problem concerning the child is then clearly stated and the entire record is reproduced so that each teacher can have a set.

The teacher who is studying this particular child presents the information at a faculty meeting, stressing the need for confidentiality. The faculty and any consultants then study the data and make recommendations on the action indicated to assist the child. At subsequent meetings, additional information may be presented and progress of the child reviewed.

By the end of the year, all faculty members will have been involved

in the study. In most cases, they will have seen the need for specialized assistance in developing a program aimed at helping all children.

The next step then is the employment of a counselor for the elementary school and the initiation of an organized program.

As mentioned earlier, the counselor at the elementary level should have as his major concern the development of all children -- although he will work with atypical children. He will work to try to understand all children through a systematic evaluation of all the information he can gather. Utilizing this information he will work with parents and teachers to enable them to better understand the assets and limitations of the child; to bring about needed environmental changes and, in some cases, to modify their own behavior. He will work with administrators in keeping them aware of the need for program and curriculum changes. The elementary counselor will also work with the child individually and in groups to bring about changes in behavior, to enable them to better understand themselves, to effect changes that inhibit learning and to give educational and vocational orientation.

In working with and through the significant adults in the child's life, the counselor will use many techniques in his efforts to help the child achieve a normal development. Examples of some methods used by counselors are as follows:

Working with Teachers

Tommy's aggressive behavior was traced to frustration over his inability to read at the fifth grade level. The counselor and teacher arranged for him to work with a slower reading group.

Harold made average grades but was a disruptive influence in the

class. Tests indicated he was exceptionally bright. Arrangements were made with his teacher to provide him with more challenging classroom work including a scientific project on which he worked with a minimum of direction.

Working with Individual Students

Mary refused to read in front of her fourth grade class. The counselor role played reading aloud with Mary in the privacy of her office for several weeks. She was then able to perform satisfactorily in front of the group.

Shelley was a withdrawn girl of eight. She would not communicate with the teacher and only to a very limited extent with the other children. By using a sentence completion test with the entire class it was ascertained that Shelley felt insecure and believed her parents did not love her as they did her older brother. Consultation with the parents helped bring about changes at home that resulted in improving Shelley's attitude and behavior.

Working with Administrators

An examination of the results from the testing program indicated that the students in grades 4, 5 and 6 consistently scored below national norms in mathematics. The principal was alerted to this and through an in-service training program teachers were upgraded in their skills in teaching math. After two years of such work, the norms moved up to equal the national one.

Working with Groups

Teaching mental hygiene in groups at the elementary level has become an increasingly important function of elementary counselors. In most cases, this program has been initiated as a supplementary reading program

by counselors and eventually taken over by the teacher with the counselor continuing to serve as a consultant and resource person. Material used includes "Seven Stories for Growth" published by Pitman Publishing Company; and a series published by American Guidance Service. These stories are read by the students and values and morals in the story are then discussed.

An orientation program to vocations is an important group activity. In this program material appropriate for each grade level is introduced that familiarizes students with occupations, training needed, etc. The purpose here is to build a backlog of information on a longitudinal basis that will enable students to make a realistic judgement on careers when they are mature enough to do so.

Depending on the particular school setting, counselors frequently use groups to teach students in personal cleanliness, responsibility, manners, peer relationships, etc.

The guidance program at the elementary level must be flexible enough to meet varying needs in different communities. The needs of children in a low-rent, government-subsidized housing area will vary substantially from those of children in upper middle class neighborhoods. Although these differences occur, emphasis in all schools should be upon developing a climate for learning that will facilitate the growth and development of each student toward that person he is capable of becoming.

In working to bring about the fullest development of each student, the elementary counselor will serve as a consultant to all members of the faculty in fostering a better understanding of students and in helping them provide a suitable emotional and learning climate. He will assist parents in understanding their children and in making needed

adjustments to stimulate their further growth and development. The cooperation of the administration will be sought to develop a school program suitable to varying abilities of the students. As a coordinator, the counselor will refer to or bring in specialists to work in the areas of special needs. He will work individually and in groups with children as a means of understanding and assisting children with their problems in helping them to develop a personal value system and to learn about vocations and professions in our society.

The elementary counselor will in essence serve as a catalyst to the entire faculty in fostering the physical, social, educational and total personality development of the child. In this role, he may serve as a coordinator of guidance services, as a consultant to parents and teachers and, finally, as a counselor to the child.